



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

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Contact: **Jan Nienow-(414) 297-1096**

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SBA Selects Wisconsin 2006 Small Business Person of the Year Additional State Winners Also Announced

Milwaukee/Madison: Jim Hatt, President; Kory Brockman, Vice President-Finance; Scott Ziarnik, Vice President-Operations; and Bob Braun, Vice President-Engineering of Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry Company, Inc. (WAF) of Manitowoc, Wisconsin has been named Wisconsin's Small Business Person of the Year for 2006 by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry is an ISO 9002 and QS9000 certified manufacturer of non-ferrous metal castings. Their castings are produced for a variety of industries including manufacturers of gasoline commercial engines, generators, diesel engines, marine engines, farm, construction and paper making machinery, to name a few. They also have a consumer product line of pressure cookers, cast aluminum utensils and medical sterilizers. Despite the challenges faced by American manufacturing companies (rising costs, aging workforce, exodus of manufacturing to off-shore companies, Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry is planning for and optimistic about its future. Sales have grown and net profits as a percentage of sales have grown. This has been accomplished through increased exposure in the marketplace via sales and marketing efforts as well as internal improvements in cost, productivity and efficiency.

WAF continues to explore and acquire equipment that supports these goals. They continue to provide benefits to their employees (education, insurance coverage, ergonomically friendly processes) that result in a productive and secure workforce as well as a good reputation as an employer in the Manitowoc area community.

WAF's management team is among 53 top small business persons—one from each state, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands, and Guam—who will be honored by SBA at national ceremonies in Washington, D.C. April 12-13, 2006. As the winners of the Wisconsin Small Business Person of the Year Award, they could be named National Small Business Persons of the Year during the national event.

As Wisconsin's Small Business Persons of the Year, WAF's management team was judged on their staying power, growth in number of employees, increase in sales and/or unit volume, current and past financial reports, innovativeness of product or service offered, response to adversity and contributions to aid community-oriented projects.

The Wisconsin SBA celebration of our Small Business winners will be held Friday, May 19, 2006 at SBA and SCORE's Awards Presentation Breakfast at Milwaukee Marriott West in Waukesha. For more information, please contact Mary Trimmier at (414) 297-1093 or email her at mary.trimmier@sba.gov.

Wisconsin's SBA District Office also named the state's Small Business Advocates of the Year and special category winners. The following categories and winners are:

Honorable Mention Small Business Persons – John Walton & Rodney Tegels, Advanced Laser Machining, Inc., Chippewa Falls

Small Business Exporter – Robert Gardenier, M E Dey, Inc., Milwaukee

Young Entrepreneur of the Year – Ryan Ipsa, Arturo's Pizzeria, Milwaukee

Minority Small Business Person of the Year – Robert Wangard, President, Cartridge Savers, Inc., Madison

Emerging Small Business Person – Ken and Meg Thoreson, Solon Springs Mercantile, Solon Springs

Minority Small Business Champion – Charles Vang, Charles Vang Agency – American Family, Milwaukee

Financial Services Champion – Timothy Schneider, Investors Community Bank, Manitowoc

Women in Business Champion – Susan K. Eick, Park Bank, Brookfield

Small Business Journalist – Heidi Pascual, Asian Wisconsine, Madison

District Director Award-Small Business Champion – Erica Kauten, SBDC, Madison

The U.S. Small Business Administration congratulates all the winners and thanks them for their commitment and contributions to Wisconsin's small business communities.

Additional information about SBA's programs and services is available at SBA's Web site: www.sba.gov and Wisconsin's SBA Website: www.sba.gov/wi